

Appln. No. : 09/945,377
Filed : August 31, 2001

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 21, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Figure 1 shows an orthopedic brace for supporting a joint having a plurality of ~~complaint~~ compliant support components. The knee brace 100 of the present invention includes a hinged shell 105 and a plurality of adjustable support straps 110 engaging the brace at two points on opposite sides of the hinge to stabilize the weakened joint throughout its range of motion. The shell 105 has an upper portion 115 conformable to the thigh and a lower portion 120 conformable to the lower leg. Each of the shell portions 115, 120 is preferably formed from a single continuous shaped piece of a stiff material such as certain plastics, fiberglass, composites, certain metals, and the like, as are known to those of skill in the art.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 10, with the following rewritten paragraph:

B2
The bottom wall of the recess includes a plurality of apertures 430 for attaching the hinge assembly to the knee brace. Two apertures 430 are shown, lying approximately on a longitudinal axis of the recess for attaching the hinge deflector to the knee brace with the fasteners or rivets 235 which pass through the components of the hinge assembly and the knee brace. Two apertures 435 are also shown, lying on an axis generally perpendicular to the longitudinal axis, for securing the stops 260 to the plates 210 and 215 with the screws or fasteners 250. One of the fasteners passes through a hole 262 in the stop 260 for securing the stop 260 between the plates 210 and 215.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

B3
The outer side 415 includes a projection 405 which extends along a majority of the length of one side of the elliptically-shaped shell 400. This can be referred to as the forward side or edge in that it is the side closest to the forward portion of a person's knee when the brace is in

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use. The projection includes a straight inner wall 405a which protrudes from the recess 415 425 and the surrounding surface 422, with a portion of that wall being flush with one side of the wall of the recess. The projection includes an outer surface 405b which slopes toward a peripheral skirt 442, and an outer edge of the shell 400, as seen in Figure 7. While the central portion of the projection curves basically toward the edge, as seen in Figure 7, the projection ends taper or curve to the surface 422, as seen in Figures 4 and 6.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 27, with the following rewritten paragraph:

B4
The outer side 415 also includes a projection 440 extending from surface 422 on the edge of the shell opposite from the projection 405. That edge of the shell can be referred to as the rear edge since it is closest to the back of the knee when the brace is in use. As seen, the projection 440 is only in the central portion of that edge ~~in that space as~~ is needed for the rotational movement of the hinge. The projection 440 limits this movement. The projection 440 also has a straight inner wall 440a and an outer curved surface 410, for deflecting external objects. The ~~curve~~ curved surfaces 405 405b and 410 curve inward toward the knee brace and hinge assembly when assembled, for deflecting an interfering external object. The curved surfaces 405 405b and 410 have approximately the same slope; however, different slopes may be employed and the curved surface 405 405b preferably extends further than the curved surface 410. The outer skirt 442 of the outer side 415 is also slightly tapered, so that there are no edges for interfering with the hinge. As seen, both projections extend above the surface 422 about the same amount to perform their deflector function.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

B5
The hinge deflector prevents locking and/or interference of a medial hinge with a medial hinge of another knee brace or, alternatively, prevents locking with other external devices, such as components of a motocross bike. The hinge deflector 165 encases the hinge and deflects the external object with curved surfaces 405 405b, 410. The curved surfaces 405 405b, 410 of the

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BS hinge deflector 165 prevent the locking because the external object slides along and off the curved surfaces 405 405b, 410. The protruding curved surfaces 405 405b, 410 extend out and over knee brace and hinge assembly to deflect any surfaces or objects that may interfere with knee brace function.